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AUTHOR Taylor, Pamela A.
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ABSTRACT

This study investigated levels of knowledge of multicultural education and issues related to cultural diversity among student teachers and teacher educators. Participants included 45 predominantly white teacher educators and 78 predominantly white preservice teachers at a mid-sized southern university. The student teachers were enrolled in a Social Foundations of Education course. All participants completed the Multicultural Knowledge Test, which measured their knowledge of topics and issues central to general multicultural education. Data analysis indicated that preservice teachers' multicultural knowledge levels were significantly below average, and teacher educators' knowledge levels were nearly, but not quite, average. Although the differences between teacher educators' and preservice teachers' scores for their multicultural knowledge were significant, the narrowness of the differences made them unimpressive. (Contains 61 references.) (SM)

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CULTURAL LITERACY: ARE PRACTICALLY AVERAGE KNOWLEDGE LEVELS ENOUGH?

Pamela A. Taylor

University of Southern Indiana

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

CULTURAL LITERACY: ARE PRACTICALLY AVERAGE KNOWLEDGE LEVELS ENOUGH?

Introduction

The next century is promising dramatic demographic changes in the nation's student population (Banks, 1995). About one-third of the youth in the United States under 18 are students of color and it is predicted that by 2020, nearly half of the nation's students will be students of color (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1993). It is further contended that this influx of different culture groups into the classroom will challenge teachers with how they should best be taught. At the same time, the need for multicultural teaching practices will become even more imperative as the classroom becomes more diverse. Preservice and beginning teachers often talk of the importance of being able to respond to the diverse backgrounds, experiences, abilities, and interests of their soon to be students; yet, few understand or are prepared for the diversity that awaits them in today's classrooms. The reality is that demographic differences between teachers and their students are increasing (Grant & Secada, 1990; Hodgkinson, 1997), and teachers have been frustrated by the numbers of students who come from physically, socially, emotionally, and financially stressed homes (Boyer, 1989). Traditionally, teachers have been prepared to work with middle-class children from dominant cultural group (Gollnick, 1990).

Hodgkinson (1997) reported that "educators need to be increasingly aware of the variety of ways in which people are diverse and recognize that diversity is an enormous advantage for the U.S." (p. 7). This requirement is a requisite for teachers, especially when larger percentages of students in many large and urban school districts come from ethnic and racial culture groups. America's diversification comes with many direct implications for the American educational system (Evans, Torrey, & Newton, 1997). With the twenty-first century pledging a reversal in the demographic makeup of America's classrooms (where children of various ethnic groups will be the majority), Evans, et al. recommend that teacher educators' priority should be to prepare teachers to work with students from culturally diverse backgrounds. Evans et al. also reported that the preference of teachers is "to teach students from their own cultural orientation, because they share common values, expectations, and experiences" (p. 9). Additionally, the research of Ladson-Billings (1991), Marshall (1993), and Moore and Reeves-Kazelskis

(1992) suggest that most teachers have concerns about working with diverse student populations and need to examine their beliefs, broaden their knowledge, and develop abilities for relating to students from diverse cultures.

Statistics show that by the year 2010, about 40% of the school age population in the United States will be persons of color (Gay, 1993; Gollnick & Chinn, 1998; McIntyre, 1993). In 23 out of the 25 largest school districts in the United States, minority children have already become the majority (Gollnick & Chinn, 1998). A recent report published by the Children's Defense Fund (Sherman, 1994) showed that 16 million American children (or one-in-four) live in poverty. Approximately 33% of black children, 13% of white children, and 35% of Hispanic children live in poverty (Johnson, 1992). Paradoxically, teachers in the United States are drawn predominately from European-American, middle-class backgrounds (Barrett, 1993; Burnstein & Cabello, 1989; Grant & Sleeter, 1989).

Demographic shifts in the nature of American culture will further confront future teachers. Harold Hodgkinson (1997), renowned demographer, predicts that "African-American populations will increase slowly while Asians, Hispanics, and Native Americans will increase rapidly in the next 25 years" (p. 3). Hodgkinson further projects that "of the 5.6 billion people in the world, . . . only 17% are white, a percentage that will decrease to 9% by 2010 (p. 3)." But, the most significant cultural shift will be seen when we realize that:

> There are about 220 nations in the world, each having some residents in the United States. We are the first world nation in the history of humanity, and our immigration has shifted from being 85 percent European to 85 percent Latin American and Asian, with a rapidly increasing contingent from the Middle East. (There are over 1,000 mosques in the U.S. as of 1995, and Muslims are increasing faster than any other religious group in the U.S.). (p. 3)

One implication of this shift is the challenge and charge to the academy that trains the teachers, to matriculate teachers who are both culturally sensitive and culturally literate. The issue of multicultural education is so important that accrediting organizations such as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) have encouraged its inclusion in studies for prospective teachers (Barry &

Lechner, 1995). Even more important, institutions of higher learning should matriculate teachers who are prepared with a consciousness for diversity, and ready and willing to champion for cultural pluralism and multicultural education (Ladson-Billings, 1994a). Therefore, preservice teachers should become culturally literate and competent in the concepts of multicultural education. Moreover, new teachers should also be mindful that the expressed purpose of public education, according to Ladson-Billings (1992), is the development of citizens who are prepared to participate in a democracy.

Multicultural education in the United States ranges from concerns with empowerment to creating national unity (Spring, 1995). Although there is little agreement as to what is multicultural education, Banks (1994) contends that it consists of three major components: an idea or concept, an educational reform movement, and a process. As an idea or concept, it is believed that all students regardless of race, gender, or social-class should have equal opportunities for a quality education. As an educational reform movement, multicultural education proponents are working for reform within schools so that all children will be given opportunities to learn. And finally, since one of the major goals of multicultural education is to create within schools and society the democratic ideals of liberty and justice for all, working toward this goal through multicultural education is a never ending process.

Further, Banks (1994) has identified five dimensions of multicultural education. They are: (a) content integration, (b) the knowledge construction process, (c) prejudice reduction, (d) an equity pedagogy, and an (e) empowering school culture and social structure. Solomon (1996) states that although

> multicultural education is an effort to reflect the growing diversity of America's classrooms, many programs move beyond curricular revisions to specifically address the academic needs of carefully defined groups of students, often minority students. Primarily, as Banks notes, while curricular programs attempt to increase the body of knowledge about different ethnic, cultural, and gender groups, student-oriented programs are intended to increase the academic achievement of these groups, even when they do not involve extensive changes in the content of the curriculum. (p. 83)

Need for the Study

As the demographics of the United States continue to change, these changes create what Banks (1991) refers to as the "demographic imperative," a situation which requires classroom teachers to be more responsive to an increasingly diverse population. The demand for educational equity for all students also require an awareness that different cultures may require different teaching practices. However, the need for different teaching strategies or practices cannot be accommodated when teachers are not aware of, or sensitive to, what those needs are. Additionally, an awareness and acceptance of the diversities of culture demand that teachers be culturally literate. Cultural literacy means being conversant with the basic ideas, issues, personalities, and events that reflect perspectives and experiences other than those of the dominant culture. With this literacy comes cultural competence, whereby teachers can argue for the changes in the curriculum that will enable students to challenge the mainstream, challenge the societal inequities, and help all students to develop accurate self-knowledge within a humane national culture (Ladson-Billings, 1992).

The purpose of this study was to assess the level of knowledge of multicultural education and cultural diversity issues of teacher educators and preservice teachers. The Multicultural Knowledge Test (Aguilar, 1995) was used to measure the level of knowledge about multicultural education issues. The following research questions were the focus of this study:

1. Do preservice teachers and teacher educators score at or above average for their knowledge about issues related to multicultural education as measured by the Multicultural Knowledge Test?

2. Are there statistically significant differences between the scores for preservice teachers and teacher educators knowledge about multicultural education issues as measured by the Multicultural Knowledge Test?

Cultural Diversity Defined

The population of the U.S. is rapidly becoming more diverse with minority populations increasing in numbers and concomitantly the majority populations decreasing. Therefore, the near future is

promising a more culturally diverse student population. Culture and cultural diversity are important concepts for educators to understand because they influence students' lives. Culture is those shared characteristics of a group of people such as, language, religion, habits of dress. customs and traditions, and ways of thinking and behaving (Banks, 1992). Culture, thereby, teaches and shapes student's identities, beliefs, and behaviors (Gollnick & Chinn, 1998). At the same time, it is important to note that there is a great deal of overlap between the definitions of the terms cultural diversity and multicultural education. Moreover, it is important for preservice teachers and their educators to realize not only the complexities in the areas of cultural diversity and multicultural education, but also the difficulty of definitively defining them.

Cushner, McClelland, and Safford (1992) described diversity as a concept expanded "to include differences based on gender, ethnicity, race, class, age, and handicapping condition" (p. xvii). Diversity is not equated "with a notion of "other". . . that all Americans are, to some degree, multicultural because they live in a multicultural society" (p. xvii). It was believed by Shapiro, Sewell, and DuCette (1995) "the most defensible position for educators is to use the term diversity. . . . that multicultural education, while very similar to diversity, is not synonymous with it, but is rather a subset of this more inclusive area" (p. 2). Thereby, DuCette, Shapiro, and Sewell (1996) defined diversity as

> . . . encompassing the domain of human characteristics which affect an individual's capacity to learn from, respond to, or interact in a school environment. These characteristics can be overt or covert, recognized by the individual or not recognized, and biologically or environmentally or socially determined. Some of the characteristics are meaningful only as they describe an individual; others are more meaningful as they describe a group. (p. 324)

Being aware of and sensitive to not only the differences in cultures, but also how cultures impact learning is a need for every teacher, regardless of who they teach. Dean Corrigan (1990), Chair of the Multicultural Education Research Committee at Texas A & M University, declared that it should be obvious "that the preparation of any teacher, of any subject, and for any level must include the

knowledge, skills, and values necessary to completely reach and teach students of increasingly diverse backgrounds" (p. 3).

In summary, culture is those shared characteristics of a group of people. Diversity, on the other hand, is the differences in those characteristics between groups. And cultural diversity is a concept very closely tied to the tenets of multicultural education which may directly impact how children learn. Hence, culture, cultural diversity, and multicultural education are concepts with which all teachers should be aware.

Multicultural Education Defined

Multicultural education is the term most often applied to educational programs designed to study concepts that deal with race, culture, language, social class, gender, and disability (Grant & Sleeter, 1993; Sleeter & Grant, 1994). Moreover, Banks (1995) explained that multicultural education is not confined to the issues of race, class, and gender, but to the tenets of a democratic society as professed by the Constitution of the United States and its guarantees for equality for all.

Even though there is much confusion about the meaning of the term multicultural education, there is general agreement on some identifying attributes of the concept. Banks (1992) stated

> there is an emerging consensus among specialists that multicultural education is a reform movement designed to being about educational equity for all students, including those from different races, ethnic groups, social classes, exceptionality, and sexual orientations. We need to create a school environment that is equitable and just; then in our discussions and classrooms, honestly try to search for a balance of views, and present them as fairly as possible. (p. 21)

Bennett (1999) defined multicultural education as an approach to teaching and learning that has as its foundation democratic values and beliefs. She assembled the terms movement, approach, process, and commitment to explain her definition of multicultural education. As a movement, multicultural education restructures the entire school climate so that teaching techniques, teacher expectations, discipline programs, and home/school/community relationships will all reflect an

atmosphere supportive of learning for all children. Bennett's approach signifies a curriculum with an all encompassing focus, in which a knowledge base that will integrate the histories and contributions of ethnic groups into the present curriculum is provided. According to Bennett, the process of multiculturalism moves individuals from ethnocentric viewpoints to more inclusive views of multicultural education and ultimately to global perspectives. For Bennett, multicultural education should be viewed as a commitment to affirm and appreciate cultural diversity. Although the concept of multicultural education is very complex, it is the term most often used to describe education policies and practices. Multicultural education is a mechanism by which teachers can recognize, accept, and affirm diversity as it relates to race, culture, language, social class, gender, and disability.

Multicultural Teacher Education Curricula

The challenge for teaching in a "more complex, knowledge-based, and multicultural society" (p. 196), according to Darling-Hammond (1996), comes with

> . . . new expectations for teaching. To help diverse learners master more challenging content, teachers must go far beyond dispensing information, giving a test, and giving a grade. They must themselves know their subject areas deeply, and they must understand how students think, if they are to create experiences that actually work to produce learning. (p. 194)

The idea that teachers need specific preparation in order to work effectively with a diverse population is not new. Goodwin (1997) reported that the concept of including "cultural diversity training in preservice teacher education programs" (p. 9) began to surface in the 1970s. Gay (1977) outlined three components for multicultural teacher education—knowledge, whereby "teachers become literate about ethnic group experiences" (p. 34); attitudes "to help teachers examine their existing attitudes and feelings toward ethnic, racial, and cultural differences" (p. 43); and skills "to translate their knowledge and sensitivities into school programs, curricular designs, and classroom instructional practices" (p. 48).

Burstein and Cabello (1989) reported over ten years ago that "the teaching profession is overwhelmingly white (89.7% in 1986), and its percentage of minority teachers has declined significantly

over the last decade. Moreover, many teachers come from middle-class backgrounds, unlike their students" (p. 9). More specifically, according to Pine and Hilliard (1990), by the year 2000, the "proportion of minority teachers in the public schools will drop from 12% to 5%" (p. 597). Sleeter (1990) affirmed that in light of the "whitening of the teaching force will not bode well for multicultural education, because . . . the impact on public schooling—and particularly on schooling for children of color—of declining numbers of teachers of color will be great" (p. 37). To Banks (1992), teachers are the keepers of the keys to freedom. As the teacher population becomes more monocultural and student population, more multicultural, the needs for teachers to be more culturally literate, is apparent. To summarize, the browning of America, in contrast to the whitening of the teaching force, indicates the need for a multicultural teacher education curricula. Future teachers will be faced with more challenges in the classroom that, according to Gay (1993), will require multicultural knowledge, attitudes, and skills.

To prepare teachers who are cultural brokers means preparing teachers who are capable of teaching all students; teachers who will not go into culture shock when they enter the classroom in this and the next century; and teachers who will challenge dominant and oppressive values in society (Delpit, 1995). Thus, it is necessary to examine preservice teachers' backgrounds and experiences to determine the types of attitudes they may bring to their classrooms. Ross and Smith (1992) concluded that preservice teachers had rather simplistic notions about the diversity of students. These preservice teachers did not, for example, see that educational welfare of minority students had any connection to broader societal conditions—they saw issues of diversity and their consequences resting largely at the individual level. Weinstein (1988) had previously suggested that unrealistic optimism may hamper preservice teachers from engaging in a serious study of educational issues. This is, perhaps, an explanation for the relative shallowness of understandings exhibited by preservice teachers.

Role of Teacher Educators

Delpit (1995) believed it is the responsibility of teacher educators to help preservice teachers become culturally literate and competent, because teacher educators play a vital role in the professional

development of preservice teachers. Teacher education faculty are the heart of teacher education as they design, implement, and assess curricular programs. Teacher educators are responsible for "knowing what to teach (content) and how to teach it (pedagogy)" (Edwards, 1997, p. 44). If preservice teachers are to become culturally literate and sensitive, it will be because of the efforts of teacher educators. In essence it is encumbered upon teacher educators to take preservice teacher on what Edwards (1997) called "a cultural journey" (p. 44).

Barry and Lechner (1995) reported that "several studies in recent years concluded that preservice teachers are not being prepared to deal with the challenges of multicultural/cross-cultural education. Preservice teachers feel inadequate to deal with either cognitive or effective aspects of multicultural education" (p. 150). Likewise, Bell, Washington, Weinstein, and Love (1997) reported that faculty's professional training has not prepared them to "address emotional and socially charged issues in the classroom (p. 299). Weinstein and Obear (1992) found that university faculty colleagues from different disciplines, when asked to respond to the question "What makes you nervous about raising issues of racism in your classroom?" expressed several concerns. In their study, faculty expressed heightened awareness about their social identities that required them to be more conscious of their attitudes and assumptions, and raised feelings of guilt, shame, or embarrassment at behaviors and attitudes of their own social group(s). These faculty members, in the Weinstein and Obear study, were also fearful of being labeled racist, sexist, homophobic and so on, or discovering previously unrecognized prejudices within themselves. They also expressed anxiety about how ro respond to biased comments in the classroom and often worried about having to expose their own struggles with the issues, reveal uncertainty, or make mistakes. But, most importantly for the faculty members in the Weinstein and Obear study, they expressed fear related to institutional risks involved in departing from traditional teaching formats and content.

Multicultural education is not simply new content but often a radical change in process as well. Hooks notes "among educators there has to be an acknowledgment that any effort to transform institutions so that they reflect a multicultural standpoint must take into consideration the fears teachers

have when asked to shift their paradigms" (p. 36). Garcia and Pugh (1992) reported that, despite unequivocal mandates of NCATE, the majority of teacher education faculty see cultural pluralism, and consequently multicultural education as a minority or civil rights issue rather than an issue relevant to the whole of society. Further, many faculty feel unqualified to deal with the issues, and thus avoid them. Essentially, Melnick and Zeichner (1995) determined that "teacher educators . . . are limited in cross-cultural experiences and understandings—they are overwhelmingly Caucasian and monolingual and culturally encapsulated" (p. 2).

Another issue discovered by Tierney and Bensimon (1996) is that "the vast majority of individuals who teach diversity-related courses are those who are considered "diverse." . . . with the small number of faculty of color and women" (p. 343) this is problematic. Tierney and Bensimon concluded that when one group of faculty are expected to teach a particular series of courses, the "mainstream group of faculty often feel as if those courses are unimportant and unnecessary" (p. 343). Consequently, the faculty teaching diversity-related courses do not receive adequate support and thereby "multicultural classes" are relegated to "a ghetto where other (mainstream) faculty dare not tread," (p. 343).

Tatto (1996) explored the "beliefs of both student teachers and their teacher educators regarding the teaching of diverse students and the conceptions of success and failure teachers hold toward diverse students" (p. 157). Tatto asked three questions in her paper:

> (1) to what extent do teacher educators themselves subscribe to a shared set of beliefs about student diversity and teaching? (2) to what extent do student teachers hold different beliefs than those of their professors? (3) to what extent do student teachers' views change in the direction of their faculty's views as students participate in teacher education programs? (p. 157)

Hence, it was one of Tatto's hypotheses that "to socialize student teachers effectively regarding student diversity, teacher education programs need to have a set of rules or norms of discourse within which teaching and learning occurs. . . " (p. 157).

There is a call for preservice teacher education programs and teacher educators to make multicultural education a curricular priority by assessing the needs of prospective teachers and fulfilling those needs at all costs. Trent (1990) called for the inclusion of "scholarship on race and ethnicity as a core part of the preparation of the nation's teachers" (p. 360) and provides three reasons:

1. The student body is becoming more diverse.

2. The economic future of the nation depends on meeting the educational needs of this diverse population.

3. The teaching force is becoming more female and more white.

A recommendation of Miranda and Scott (1994) is for colleges and universities

> to adopt a core of multicultural education requirements that will provide future teachers with both general and specific multicultural education knowledge, extending from broad coverage of multicultural education issues to classes and experiences that will build knowledge about specific cultural/racial groups in a variety of content areas. (p. 51)

For teacher educators to address the needs of preservice teachers, it would be helpful to understand where they are in order to direct their paths toward a cultural consciousness. Carter G. Woodson (1933) admonished teachers to discover their students' background as a way to explore their responsibilities. More than 60 years later, Woodson's words have gone unheeded. Neither the content of teacher education curricula nor the role of teacher educators has been designed or defined to address the following questions posed by Webb (1998):

1. How can we assess the curriculum to insure that it reflects the culture, experiences, and contributions of diverse persons?

2. How do my own attitudes about the potential of diverse students influence my personal teaching style and classroom behavior?

3. In what ways can the learner's frame of reference help him or her in learning and applying new content?

4. What do we know about diverse others and their cultures that can be used to inspire and empower students to achieve greater academic success?

Teacher education involves more than the transfer of infomation from teacher educator to preservice teacher. It involves what Melnick and Zeichner (1995) describes as a "profound transformation of people and of world views and assumptions that they have carried with them for their entire lives" (p. 14). As Nieto (1996) says, an important part of becoming a multicultural teacher is becoming a multicultural person. This kind of transformation is beyond the current capabilities of most teacher educators. For teacher educators to make such a transformation, they would have to make major additions to their knowledge base, become more aware of their own cultural orientation, and increase their sensitivity about their own behavioral approaches to diverse groups (Shade, 1995).

In order for the tenets and goals of multicultural education to be realized in teacher education programs, the role of teacher educators will have to be more narrowly defined. The consensus in the literature is that it is the duty of teacher educators to practice what they preach. Further, researchers who have explored teacher development in the area of multicultural education agree that movement toward a multicultural perspective begins with individual knowledge and awareness (Gay, 1977; Sleeter, 1992). They argue that in considering professional development in this area, preservice teachers need to first explore their knowledge and awareness before they look at teaching skills and strategies. Such continua, from the acquisition of knowledge and awareness through to implementation, appear often in the discussion of teacher preparation (Banks, 1994; Banks & Banks, 1989; Cushner, McClelland, & Safford, 1996; Grant & Sleeter, 1989). Burstein and Cabello (1989) include reflection as the final step, arguing that teachers need an opportunity to consider their practice where diversity is concerned and to share their experiences and efforts with colleagues. Sleeter (1992) believes that teachers must first become aware of the basic issues that support a need for multicultural education. She presents four primary categories of the needs that teachers have to become effective at multicultural education: "teachers must develop a knowledge base about cultural diversity, acceptance of cultural differences and a commitment to serve cultural minority communities, and skills for translating multicultural education into

action in the classroom" (p. 33). If teacher educators are to be effective at advocating the goals and tenets of multicultural education they must be held to the same standard they hold for preservice teachers.

Summarily, the necessity of preparing all preservice teachers to work with culturally diverse students in culturally diverse settings should be clear. What may be less clear is how teacher educators will assume their role to this end. The imperative for teacher education is the inclusion of multicultural education in the curriculum. Further, the role of teacher educators in this process will require them to do several things. They must examine their own beliefs about diversity issues, enhance their awareness of the tenets and concepts of cultural diversity, and become proactive in meeting the mandates established by NCATE.

Methods And Procedures

The subjects for this study consisted of 78 preservice teacher education students enrolled in three sections of Social Foundations of Education course at a mid-sized southern university. These subjects represented a sample of convenience as they were intact classes when surveyed. The subjects completed the Multicultural Knowledge Test during their first regularly scheduled class period. As a result, there was a 100% response rate to this study. Of the 86 teacher educators identified as having either taught a course or supervised a field experience required for every preservice teacher at the same university, 45 volunteered to participate in this study.

Data were collected using the Multicultural Knowledge Test (Aguilar, 1995), which is a 35-item, seven-point Likert-type response format which ranged from 1 (*none*) to 7 (*extensive*) to measure knowledge of topics and issues central to general multicultural education. The responses to the Multicultural Knowledge Test were statistically compared to the average knowledge level score of 4.00, the median test value.

Several steps were involved in the data analysis. For research questions one (Do preservice teachers and teacher educators score at or above average for their knowledge about issues related to multicultural education as measured by the Multicultural Knowledge Test?), the mean scores for the of level of multicultural education knowledge were computed and analyzed with a one-sample t-test. Research question one was compared and analyzed with a test value of 4.00, the median or average knowledge level for the Multicultural Knowledge Test. For research question two (Are there statistically significant differences between the scores for preservice teachers and teacher educators knowledge about multicultural education issues as measured by the Multicultural Knowledge Test?), an independent sample t-test was used to compare the mean scores for the preservice teachers' and teacher educators' level of multicultural education knowledge. Statistical analysis of the data was performed through computer analysis by the computer program Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows.

Demographics

Table 1 presents demographic information regarding the age, gender, race, and religion of subjects. The majority of preservice teachers were of traditional age, under 25 years old (56%), female (62%), White (79.5%, and Baptist (65.4%). One preservice teacher was self-declared as mixed/bi-racial. The majority of teacher educators, on the other hand, were over 41 years old (68.8%), practically even by gender with 53.3% female and 46.7% male, and also predominately white (80%). One teacher educator was self-declared as mixed/bi-racial and one as yellow (of Asian descent). For religion, teacher educators presented far more diversity across religious groups than preservice teachers. The diversity across religions provide for a wider range of experience and cultural awareness for teacher educators than for preservice teachers. The religious affiliations of preservice teachers were predominately Baptist and Methodist (combined 82%).

Table 1. **Demographic Frequency and Percentage of Preservice Teachers and Teacher Educators**

	Preservice Teachers[1]		Teacher Educators[2]	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Age				
< 25	56	73.8	0	0.0
25 - 30	12	16.4	3	6.7
31 - 35	7	9.0	5	11.1
36 - 40	2	2.6	6	13.3
41 - 49	1	1.3	20	44.4
50 +	0	0.0	11	24.4
Gender				
Female	62	79.5	24	53.3
Male	16	20.5	21	46.7
Race				
Black	15	19.2	7	15.6
White	62	79.5	36	80.0
Mixed/Bi-racial	1	1.3	1	2.2
Yellow			1	2.2
Religion				
Baptist	51	65.4	12	26.7
Catholic	2	2.6	8	17.8
Methodist	13	16.7	7	15.6
Other Christian	9	11.5	9	20.0
None specified	3	3.8	7	15.6
Atheist/Agnostic	0	0.0	1	2.2
Jewish	0	0.0	1	2.2

Note: [1] N = 78. [2] N = 45.

Preservice teachers were almost evenly split between elementary (46.2%) and secondary education (46.2%) for majors, with the majority (64.1%) being seniors (see Table 2).

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage of Preservice Teachers' Majors and Class Rank

	Frequency [1]	Percent [2]
Major		
Elementary Education	36	46.2
Secondary Education	36	46.2
Special Education	5	6.4
None specified	1	1.3
Class Rank		
Senior	50	64.1
Junior	17	21.8
Sophomore	6	7.7
Freshman	3	3.8
None specified	2	2.6

Note: [1] N = 78. [2] Total = 100%.

Table 3 shows that 75.6% of the teacher educators hold doctorate degrees and the highest percentage have over 20 years teaching experience (44.4%). While at the same time, the greatest majority of teacher educators' tenure at this university ranged from one to ten years.

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage for Teacher Educators' Education and Professional Experience

	Frequency [1]	Percent [2]
Highest Degree Earned		
Doctorate	34	75.6
Masters	11	24.4
Years Teaching		
1 - 3	4	8.9
4 - 5	1	2.2
6 - 10	6	13.3
11 - 20	14	31.1
> 20	20	44.4
Years Teaching at MSU		
< one year	4	8.9
1 - 3	11	24.4
4 - 5	12	26.7
6 - 10	10	22.2
11 - 20	5	11.1
> 20	3	6.7

Note: [1] N = 45. [2] Total = 100%.

Statistical Analysis of Data

The data for research question one were analyzed with a one-sample *t*-test, with a test value of 4.00, an average knowledge level. The scores that tested with statistical significance above 4.00 indicated above average knowledge levels, while a score showing a statistical significance below 4.00 indicated below average knowledge levels. Preservice teachers' multicultural knowledge mean score (M = 3.08) was significantly below average (see Table 4).

Table 4. Multicultural Education Knowledge Level of Preservice Teachers

	M	SD	SE	t-value	df	2-tail Prob.
Level of Multicultural Knowledge	**3.08**	**.93**	**0.11**	**- 8.75**	**77**	**.000***

Note. * p < .05. N = 78.

Teacher educators' score, although below the test value of 4.00, indicated no statistically significant difference from the test value (see Table 5) thereby, their mean score (M = 3.93) was average.

Table 5. Multicultural Education Knowledge Level of Teacher Educators

	M	SD	SE	t-value	df	2-tail Prob.
Level of Multicultural Knowledge	**3.93**	**1.06**	**.16**	**- .51**	**44**	**.613**

Note: * p < .05. N = 45.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the mean scores of preservice teachers' and teacher educators' multicultural knowledge levels. The overall comparison revealed that teacher educators had significantly higher mean score than preservice teachers, t(121) = 4.62, SE = .19, p = .000. Thence, there is a statistically significant difference between preservice teachers' and teacher educators' knowledge about multicultural education issues (see Table 6).

Table 6. Comparison of Preservice Teachers' and Teacher Educators' Mean Scores for the Multicultural Knowledge Test

	Preservice Teachers [1]		Teacher Educators [2]			
	M	SD	M	SD	t-value	2-tail Prob
Multicultural Knowledge Level	**3.08**	**.93**	**3.92**	**1.07**	**4.62**	**.000***

Note. [1] N = 78. [2] N = 45, df = 121.
* Average knowledge level (4.00), $p < .05$.

The first research question was to determine if preservice teachers and teacher educators would score at or above average for their knowledge about issues related to multicultural education. Using a test value of 4.00 as an average knowledge level, preservice teachers scored ($M = 3.08$) significantly below average and teacher educators scored ($M = 3.93$) practically average. The second research question compared the multicultural education knowledge level scores of preservice teachers and teacher educators to determine if there would be a statistically significant difference. The results revealed that teacher educators' had a statistically significant higher mean score than preservice teachers, $t(121) = 4.62$, $SE = .19$, $p = .000$.

Conclusions and Discussions

The multicultural knowledge level of preservice teachers ($M = 3.08$) is significantly below average. This finding supports the recommendations for teachers to become multiculturally literate (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Gay, 1993; Goodwin, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1994b). An average knowledge level of 4.00 was established for this study. The multicultural knowledge level of teacher educators (university faculty responsible for either teaching a required teacher education program course and/or supervising a field experience), ($M = 3.93$), although practically average, indicates a need for teacher educators to also increase their knowledge levels. Because as we are reminded by Melnick and Zeichner (1995) "there is an old adage—teachers teach what they know—and so do teacher educators. The correlate is that we can't teach what we don't know." (p. 14) A comparison of these scores revealed a

statistically significant difference between the scores, $t(121) = 4.62$, $SE = .19$, $p = .000$. This finding is in keeping with the affirmations of Garcia and Pugh (1992) that, despite unequivocal mandates of NCATE, the majority of teacher education faculty see cultural pluralism, and consequently multicultural education as a minority or civil rights issue and they (faculty) feel unqualified to deal with the issues, and thus avoid them. This avoidance defies the determination of Zeichner, Melnick, and Gomez (1996) that

> in order for teachers to be able to implement the principle of cultural inclusion in their classrooms, they need general sociocultural knowledge about child and adolescent development, about second language acquisition, and about the ways that socioeconomic circumstances, language, and culture shape school performance and educational achievement. They must also have specific knowledge about the languages, cultures, and circumstances of the particular students in their classrooms. . . . teachers must be able to utilize this knowledge in the organization of the curriculum and instruction to stimulate student learning. (p. 143)

Although, the differences between teacher educators' and preservice teachers' scores for their multicultural knowledge were significant, the narrowness of the differences make them unimpressive. Especially in light of the fact that, the scores for the teacher educators were below the average of 4.00, the average score. However, the low scores for teacher educators confirm the premise of Grant (1998) that there is little hope that teacher-candidates are being trained by persons who are themselves highly sensitive to and knowledgeable about diversity issues as they refer to life in the classroom. This premise is substantiated by the findings of Grant (1998) that concluded that more than 95% of teacher educators have had no substantive teaching experience in urban schools. The results from this study were consistent with Grant's findings that many among the educational professorate has had little or no training in multicultural education.

Summary

The United States is often called a nation of immigrants. As such, our American society is in the midst of a cultural revolution, wherein the demographic makeup is rapidly changing. With these changes come a cultural reversal, not only in our society, but also in the classrooms. It is projected that children of color will be the majority in the classroom, while on the other hand, there will more teachers of European

American descent. With these changes will come a greater need for cultural awareness and sensitivity, for preservice and inservice teachers and their teacher educators.

Additionally, the role of teacher educators in addressing these needs has become more apparent. To confront the parochialism of preservice teachers, teacher educators will need to view cultural pluralism and the issues and tenets of multicultural education in a different light. But, first, teacher educators will need to assess their own attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge of this subject. Second, they will accept the need to make multicultural education a curricular priority. Third, they commit will to the challenge of meeting, not only mandated standards of NCATE, but also the needs of preservice teachers. Finally, the title questioned whether practically average levels of knowledge for teacher educators was enough, and the answer must be an unequivocal NO. The question now becomes not what to do about it, but whether we will.

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